

of this Hemisphere should fail to meet their commitments against outside Communist penetration — then I want it clearly understood that this Government will not hesitate in meeting its primary obligations which are to the security of our Nation!"

Having uttered this obscure but emphatic warning, he went on to define the lesson of the episode. Communism, he said, was now less interested in arms as the means of direct aggression than "as the shield behind which subversion, infiltration, and a host of other tactics steadily advance, picking off vulnerable areas one by one in situations which do not permit our own armed intervention." This "new and deeper struggle," Kennedy said, was taking place every day, without fanfare, in villages and markets and classrooms all over the globe. It called for new concepts, new tools, a new sense of urgency. "Too long we have fixed our eyes on traditional military needs, on armies prepared to cross borders, on missiles poised for flight. Now it should be clear that this is no longer enough — that our security may be lost piece by piece, country by country, without the firing of a single missile or the crossing of a single border."

He concluded: "We intend to reexamine and reorient our forces of all kinds — our tactics and our institutions here in this community." I was never quite clear what this last phrase meant, unless it referred to the CIA and the Joint Chiefs; but once again obscurity probably helped the impact of the speech. Certainly the occasion reestablished him in a fighting stance without committing him to reckless action.

The next step was to secure the administration against partisan attack. The Republicans, of course, were a little inhibited by their own role in conceiving the operation; but Kennedy took no chances. Later that day he called in Richard Nixon (whose advice on Cuba was to "find a proper legal cover and . . . go in" *), and by the weekend he had talked to Eisenhower, Nelson Rockefeller and Barry Goldwater. Harry S. Truman, being a Democrat, required only the attention of the Vice-President.

As part of the strategy of protection, he moved to stop the gathering speculation over responsibility for the project. When in one

* Richard M. Nixon, "Cuba, Castro and John F. Kennedy," *Reader's Digest*, November 1964.